COMMERCIAL AVIATION

— AIRLINES — AIRPORTS —

THE WEEK AT CROYDON

Lullingstone and All That : Special Occasion : The Control School : Strays

APPARENTLY the whole story of Lullingstone Aerodrome has been greatly exaggerated, and there seems to be no reason to suppose that Imperial Airways is committed finally and definitely to leave Croydon, nor is it anything but nonsense to say that Croydon is "condemned by experts" because it is within the fog area. The only "experts" who do not realise that, within the next five years, it won't matter twopence whether it is foggy or not, are self-appointed ones. It is not the question of fog but of future traffic congestion which matters. Even now commercial machines which, if alone in the skies, might reach Croydon with ease often have to wait outside the controlled zone for as long as an hour.

Croydon, I am assured on unimpeachable authority, will not be abandoned, and if Imperials move to Lullingstone, so much the better for them and for those who stay. As for rail transport facilities, I should like to know whether a midnight arrival at Lullingstone, containing three passengers, will be met by a special electric train. Moreover, machines with connections to make in half the cities of Europe are sometimes late. Will electric trains, like the much despised coach, stand by for an hour?

Tarmac Toppers

The importance of any visit by air may usually be gauged by the number and brilliance of the top hats on the tarmac, though some consideration should be given to who or what is under the ceremonial headgear. On Monday of last week no less a personage than Mr. Anthony Eden, together with the Swedish Minister in London, awaited the arrival of Mr. Sandler, Sweden's Foreign Minister, who arived by Scandinavian Air Express with Mrs. Sandler.

Mr. Mollison was at Croydon most of last week. His aeroplane, completely overhauled by Rollasons, had to be out of this country before Sunday in order to save a £2,000 import duty. When it would not start Customs very sportingly allowed him extra time.

M. Bouderie, of Air France, is now back at Croydon after his operation and a period of recuperation at Cannes. He looks fitter and says he feels a different man. Another old friend to return is Mr. S. L. Turner, who is flying again for Wrightways. He was one of the original "crack of dawn" brigade with that company, and won for himself an outstanding reputation for regular flying in exceptionally difficult conditions.

Practical Initiation

Mr. Jimmy Jeffs now has his school for (about a dozen) people wishful to undertake the arduous life of a control officer. Eminently sound and practical in all he does, Jeffs has not started a pedagogic academy where theory and blackboard stuff reign supreme, but has evolved an interesting and practical system. His classroom is to all intents and purposes a control tower, complete with radio. The actual course of machines, both British and foreign, is followed, and when pilots ask Croydon for any information the pupils have to make their own decisions—with speed. If a pupil decided on a course of action which would tie air traffic into knots, the reasons for its inadvisability are explained.

One of the things which are really needed at Croydon is a board at the entrance to the main hall on which business visitors may see the numbers and positions of the rooms occupied by the different firms. Upstairs one frequently meets forlorn strangers who have just completed their tenth circuit of the corridors (ducking to avoid stalactites) and who are worn out and almost in tears.

A. VIATOR.

"Quads." for T.W.A.

THE Boeing Company is to build a number of four-engined transports, based on the design of the "299" bomber, for Transcontinental and Western Air, Inc. With four G-100 Cyclones the machines will cruise at over 200 m.p.h. at high altitude.

Pan American Airways expects to order similar aircraft. Two of their machines will have sub-stratosphere equipment and should cruise on 75 per cent. power at 266 m.p.h. at an altitude of 20,000 ft.

The Cologne Disaster

A LITTLE before 12.30 a.m. on March 16 an Imperial Airways' D.H.86 crashed in a wood near Bergheim, some twenty miles from Cologne, with a loss of three lives. The machine had left Croydon at 9.30 p.m. on a schedule flight, but no mails or regular passengers were carried. All that is known is that the weather conditions over Belgium were bad at the time, with rain and sleet, and the last radio message was given at a little before 11 p.m. saying that the machine was flying in good visibility.

In addition to the crew, consisting of Capt. G. B. Holmes, the pilot, and Mr. C. E. Langman, the radio operator, Mr. C. F. Wolley-Dod, the European Manager of Imperial Airways, was on board.

Capt. Holmes flew with the R.F.C. in 1917, and remained in the Service until 1927. Thereafter he was a commercial pilot in Canada before joining Imperial Airways.

Mr. C. F. Wolley-Dod, O.B.E.

LAST week's Imperial Airways' tragedy not only lost Capt. G. B. Holmes and Mr. C. E. Langman to the company, but also resulted in the death of Mr. C. F. Wolley-Dod, the European manager for Imperial Airways. His colleagues are not alone in their grief for everybody at Croydon knew Wolley-Dod, and everybody both liked and admired him.

Educated at Rugby, Charles Francis Wolley-Dod served in the Sherwood Foresters until 1916, and from then onwards was a fighting pilot in the R.F.C. and R.A.F. until the end of hostilities. Amongst other jobs after the war, he was an instructor to the Spanish Air Force and was also with Vickers. Later he joined Instones, and finally became a pilot of Imperial Airways.

He was, however, one of those men with too great an organising and business ability to remain on the air routes for long. Imperial Airways wisely recognised this and made him manager of the Near East and North African Division. For the past five years Wolley-Dod had been European Manager, in which capacity his untiring energy and shrewd common sense, as well as his almost uncanny grasp of the whole European aviation situation, made him invaluable to his company and earned him the respect of all those, whatever their nationality, with whom he had business relations. His job was not an easy one, yet he seemed to perform it easily, and his success was best gauged by the exceptional measure of popularity he enjoyed. By his death air transport has lost one of its ablest men.